

May 11, 2010

An adjourned meeting of the Council of the City of Bedford, Virginia, from the April 27, 2010, adjourned Council meeting was held in the Council Hall of the Municipal Building at 5:30 p.m., May 11, 2010.

Members present: Mayor W. D. Tharp; Councilwoman Mary L. Flood; Councilman Jeffrey B. Hubbard; Councilman Steve C. Rush; Councilman C. G. Stanley, Jr.; Councilman James A. Vest; and Vice Mayor Robert T. Wandrei.

Members absent: None

Staff present: City Manager Charles P. Kolakowski; City Attorney W. W. Berry, IV; and Clerk of the Council Teresa W. Hatcher.

Mayor Tharp opened the meeting and led all present in saying the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

City Manager Kolakowski reported that JetBroadBand is being sold.

It was the consensus of Council to hold a public hearing regarding selection of a new cable company.

The City Manager spoke to Council regarding an issue which will be facing Council as a result of state legislation that made changes in the public employees' retirement system. Mr. Kolakowski stated that new employees hired after July 1, 2010, will have to pay the employee portion of the pension contribution unless Council takes action otherwise. Formal information has not yet been issued by the State. The City Manager stated this has some impact on the budget and will be brought before Council as soon as the information from the State is received.

City Manager Kolakowski reported that Verizon is challenging its personal property values statewide and has requested a 54% reduction in its personal property valuation, which amounts to about \$1.6 billion reduction. For the City of Bedford, that would be about \$20,000 a year in reduced personal property taxes.

Valerie Wilson, Commissioner of the Revenue, reported some of the Commissioners of the Revenue are obtaining legal counsel to petition against Verizon's request. Ms. Wilson will review information she just received with the City Attorney.

The City Manager stated Verizon's argument is that fewer and fewer people have landlines and therefore, those landlines are less valuable to Verizon by generating less income.

Ms. Wilson stated that Board of Assessor hearings have been held and the preliminary increase in values looks to be from 4% to 5%.

Members of Council asked various questions of staff regarding items in the proposed budget.

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Staff members answered those questions and explained the clarification of certain line items in the proposed budget.

The City Manager is to check with the City School Board regarding the need for \$6,428 for training expense.

City Manager Kolakowski stated that the list of streets for repaving needs to be updated.

There was discussion of the cost of the annual 4th of July fireworks being \$14,000. Assistant City Manager Warner stated the cost is usually split with Bedford County and he has not heard from the County on this matter. Mr. Warner is to check with the vendor regarding cutting the cost.

The staff will provide information to Council regarding increases in the Water & Sewer Fund, Supply & Purification: Water-Bell Town Rd AFD and Materials & Supplies/Lab. Electric Fund: Dues and Assoc Memberships; Bad Debt Expense. Ms. Jordan will check into why there is not a comparable Bad Debt Expense Account in the Water & Sewer Fund.

Mayor Tharp expressed his support of the Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce and indicated he would be in favor of level funding for the Chamber in the amount of \$2,500.

Councilman Vest asked the City Manager to increase the funding of the Chamber of Commerce to \$2,500 in the proposed budget.

Mayor Tharp thanked Councilman Vest for his extensive work on the budget.

Councilman Vest commended the staff and department heads for their work in developing the proposed budget.

The Mayor stated it would be helpful for Council to have a workshop/seminar on the Electric Department as suggested by Councilman Vest.

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.